

MESSAGE

OF
DAVID B. JEROME,

Retiring Governor of Michigan,
TO THE LEGISLATURE

JANUARY 3, 1883.

SENATORS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: The constitution makes it my duty to give the Legislature information of the condition of the State, and to recommend such measures as shall seem expedient.

When the constitution was adopted, thirty-two years since, the task thus imposed upon the Governor was of easy performance compared to the present magnitude. Then the population of the State was less than 400,000. The Michigan University and the State Normal School, with an investment for the former of \$100,000 and for the latter of \$170,000, constituted the educational system. The asylum for the insane at Kalamazoo, and the institution for the deaf, dumb and blind, at Flint, with an investment for the former of \$302,000 and for the latter of \$181,500, comprehended the State charitable institutions, and the crude beginning of a prison at Jackson, on which had been expended \$106,377.94, was the only penal institution belonging to the State. These constituted the institutions of the State, which information was to be given at the date above referred to. The railroads scarcely exceeded in length and capacity the private railroads now used by Michigan lumbermen for hauling their saw logs from where the timber grows to floatable streams. The commerce on the surrounding lakes was insignificant in comparison with its present magnitude. No communication had then been opened with the Upper Peninsula except in a small way, by transshipment and land carriage around the Sault. That Peninsula, with the major part of the north half of the Lower Peninsula, was then a wilderness, without inhabitants and only partially explored. The agricultural products of the State were scarcely sufficient for home consumption. Copper, iron and salt were not produced in our State for shipment, and there were few factories to give employment to our people. We simply possessed the undeveloped, and, to a great extent, unknown elements upon which great States have since risen.

During the years that have since intervened, extraordinary progress has been made, until, without ostentation and with commendable pride, we can invite comparison with any State in the Union. Our population has reached 1,750,000, 1,000,000 of which has been added within the last twenty years. The finances, the primary school system, the University, the State Normal School, and the State House of Correction and Reformatory; the 4,000 miles of railroad; the fisheries and State boards, are among the prominent points about which I am called upon to give information and to make suggestions. My aim will be to discharge the duty imposed, with a view of aiding you in performing your higher responsibilities to the State.

FINANCIAL STATE.
The State is in a favorable financial condition. The policy engrafted upon its legislative practice more than twenty years since, and which has been invariably adhered to in conducting its financial affairs, "to pay as you go," or to make provision for needed means before their expenditure has been entered upon—has resulted in numerous advantages. The people who are called upon to pay taxes in the State, with the improvements, are more rigidly inclined to weigh with care proposed enterprises and to scrutinize the acts of officials charged with the work. Again, business conducted purely on cash basis, with the improvements, has been more rigidly inclined to weigh with care proposed enterprises and to scrutinize the acts of officials charged with the work. Again, business conducted purely on cash basis, with the improvements, has been more rigidly inclined to weigh with care proposed enterprises and to scrutinize the acts of officials charged with the work.

The bonded debt made it necessary to provide means for its extinguishment. The constitution required the creation of a sinking fund for this purpose. This has been complied with, and within the last thirty years over \$5,000,000 have been used for that purpose from revenues derived equally from direct taxation, from sales of educational lands, and from the interest collected from corporations. These funds were constantly accumulating. Loans to banks would not yield the rate of interest the bonds were bearing; prudence dictated that bonds should be retired before maturity, so far as practicable. This was done. The surplus funds in the treasury that could not be used were loaned, at the best rate of interest, to the State banks. While from the latter source the interest earnings have reached nearly \$700,000, they are small compared to the benefits derived from paying the bonds in advance of maturity.

In addition to the contributions to the payment of the bonded debt, the revenues from direct taxation and from the sales of educational lands have defrayed the general expenses of the State and have built up its institutions.

The specific taxes collected from corporations have not only contributed to the payment of the principal and the interest of the bonded debt, but have paid the interest on the trust fund for the State.

Again, from the surplus revenue from specific taxes over \$1,000,000 have been distributed among the primary schools in addition to the interest payments as above.

The expenditures pursuant to appropriations for lands and permanent improvements for State institutions are as follows:

The University	\$41,000.00
State Normal School	\$67,452.72
Agricultural College	\$263,372.72
State Public School	\$179,919.90
Eastern Asylum for Insane	\$67,419.90
Michigan Asylum for Insane	\$292,780.80
New Asylum for Insane, Truro	\$20,000.00
Asylum for the Deaf and Blind	\$133,919.90
State Prison	\$1,300,000.00
State House of Correction	\$2,302,914.32
Reformatory	\$16,290.32
State Reform School	\$18,112.29
Reformatory School for Boys	\$18,112.29
Capital Building (including the old)	\$1,144,483.31
Total	\$5,642,028.00

These achievements are the well-rounded results of judicious laws enforced by faithful administration in the various departments of government.

The condition of the treasury up to the 30th day of September last is as follows:

Bal. on hand in treasury Sept. 30, 1882	\$1,678,543.07
Receipts for fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1883	\$2,699,288.07
Total	\$4,377,831.14

St. Mary's Falls ship canal fund	\$6,924.12
War fund	\$11,703.29
Sundry deposits	\$6,510.29
Total	\$23,637,933.21

The amount of specific appropriations unpaid Sept. 30, 1883, is \$392,377.90. The bonded debt of the State has been reduced during the past two years as follows:

Two-million loan bonds, 1883	\$1,000,000.00
War bounty bonds	\$1,000,000.00
Adjusted bonds	\$3,000.00
Total	\$5,000.00

The funded and fundable debt of the State Sept. 30, 1883, was as follows:

INTEREST-BEARING BONDS	
Two-million loan bonds, bearing 6 per cent. interest, due Jan. 1, 1883	\$390,000.00
War bounty bonds, bearing 7 per cent. interest, due May 1, 1890	\$293,000.00
Total interest-bearing bonds	\$683,000.00

NON-INTEREST-BEARING BONDS

\$21,000 unpaid five-million loan adjustable at \$18.37 per \$1,000	\$12,149.37
Total bonded debt	\$695,149.37

The cash in the treasury applicable to the payment of the bonded debt is as follows:

Sinking fund, Sept. 30, 1883	\$208,835.27
United States bonds	\$200,000.00
Total	\$408,835.27

Credits since interest on U. S. bonds \$ 3,375.00

Transfer from specific tax fund	\$3,375.00
Total	\$412,210.27

Debit since

Payment of interest on U. S. bonds	\$3,375.00
Bonds purchased, two-million loan bonds, 1883	\$1,000,000.00
War bounty bonds	\$1,000,000.00
U. S. bonds	\$200,000.00
Total	\$2,203,375.00

The money for the payment of the part-paid bonds is in the general fund, and is as follows:

Railroad and other deposits subject to draft	\$3,375.00
From the sale of lands donated by the State to the State for educational purposes	\$1,000,000.00
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Total	\$1,003,375.00

The revenues of the State are principally derived from:

1. The sale of public lands granted to the State for educational purposes by the United States.
2. From taxes assessed upon the taxable property of the State, denominated State taxes.
3. From specific taxes collected from corporations.

The funds received from the sale of lands have been used toward the payment of the bonded debt and for the general purposes of the State. Interest thereon must be paid from taxes under the following provisions of the constitution:

"The proceeds from the sale of all lands that have been or hereafter may be granted by the United States to the State for educational purposes, and the proceeds from the sale of other property given by individuals, or appropriated by the State for like purposes, shall be and remain a perpetual fund, the interest and income of which, together with the proceeds of the sale of lands, shall be applied to the payment of the interest on the bonded debt, and the principal of the same, and the payment of the interest and the principal of the State bonded debt until the latter was provided for by placing in the sinking fund an amount equal to the interest on the principal of the same. When the sinking fund became equal to the outstanding bonds, the whole amount of specific taxes were applied to educational purposes, and will continue to be so applied."

This provision is mandatory and must be complied with.

The primary taxes collected from corporations are imposed in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, as follows:

"The Legislature may provide for the collection of specific taxes from banking, railroad, and other corporations, and other corporations, and the proceeds thereof shall be applied to the payment of the interest on the bonded debt, and the principal of the same, and the payment of the interest and the principal of the State bonded debt until the latter was provided for by placing in the sinking fund an amount equal to the interest on the principal of the same. When the sinking fund became equal to the outstanding bonds, the whole amount of specific taxes were applied to educational purposes, and will continue to be so applied."

Under the latter constitutional provision the specific taxes heretofore collected have been applied, up to 1880, in paying the interest on the principal and the interest of the bonded debt, but have paid the interest on the trust fund for the State.

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I called the attention of the last Legislature, at its special session held in February and March, to the disastrous forest fires which had devastated the State during the past year. In the month of September previous, the Huron peninsula. Three thousand buildings had been destroyed, 18,000 persons had been deprived of the means of support, and between 300 and 350 lives had been swept away in this awful calamity. Only the benevolence and co-operation of the public at large had prevented death by starvation. Committees had been organized in Detroit, Huron, Flint, East Saginaw, Saginaw and Bay City to gather and distribute supplies, and they had been aided in obtaining contributions by those of other places. It became evident, however, that a central head had become a necessity, and, at the request of the committees representing the places above named, I designated a State Commission to act as a central organization for the relief of the sufferers.

I named those made up of the Hon. J. M. Conger, Hon. Charles T. Gorman, Gen. F. W. Swift, Alexander H. Day, D. C. Whitcomb and George C. Codd, Esquires. In Detroit, Huron, Flint, East Saginaw, Saginaw and Bay City to gather and distribute supplies, and they had been aided in obtaining contributions by those of other places. It became evident, however, that a central head had become a necessity, and, at the request of the committees representing the places above named, I designated a State Commission to act as a central organization for the relief of the sufferers.

The Port Huron committee continued to act independently, and was active in the distribution of a large amount of money and supplies to the sufferers in that city. Their action I have no report.

I issued an appeal to the people of the United States, stating the magnitude of the disaster, the appeal of the committee, and requesting aid.

In response to this and the appeals made very generally through the press, most liberal contributions continued to be made from not only the people of our own State, but from almost every State and Territory in the Union. Contributions also came from Canada, from Great Britain, from France and from South America. While all were liberal and generous, the donations from Boston and Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Hartford, Newark, Albany, Baltimore, Rochester, Lancaster and Charleston (S. C.) were most munificent.

The committee continued the work with rare energy and discretion, and, with the means contributed, the sufferers were cared for fairly well. In the last days of January, I found it became apparent that their wants could not be met by private methods until the harvest would bring relief. After full consultation with many citizens, I decided to convene the Legislature in extraordinary session, to consider the disaster, and to provide means to relieve the sufferers, and for other important State matters. On the 23d of February the Legislature convened, and, after considering the facts presented by the committee, and the reports of the committee, a resolution was passed, and an appropriation was made of \$250,000, or so much as might be needed, and \$15,000 additional for the rebuilding of the school houses destroyed. The distribution of the money for the relief of the sufferers, and the State continued their efforts until the last harvest was gathered, which, from its abundance, placed them again in an independent condition, with a bright and prosperous future before them.

The aid thus rendered by contributions and the State sustained their efforts until the last harvest was gathered, which, from its abundance, placed them again in an independent condition, with a bright and prosperous future before them.

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extra session subsequently held. The work of the commission was so thoroughly and intelligently performed that the bills reported by it were made into laws. The admirable condition of the State, and the prompt collection of the revenues of the State, will fully give the rights of the property-holders, and will enable the State to drive a valid title in case of a resort to sale of realty for the nonpayment of taxes. It will also restore to tax-paying property millions of acres of land that have been abandoned, and abandoned paying taxes on, and enable the State to realize some portion of the large sums advanced on bids for delinquent taxes on these lands, by sales of the interest of the State in the lands, and by the sale of the property-holders, and will enable the State to drive a valid title in case of a resort to sale of realty for the nonpayment of taxes. 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